

DECEMBER 2004

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BLOOMINGTON RESOURCES NEW ONLINE DIRECTORY TAKES FLIGHT

WANT A QUICK CONNECTION TO resources in Bloomington? Log on to the Bloomington Information Resource Directory (BIRD) where you'll find arts and entertainment, education, real estate, visitor information, sports and fitness, volunteer opportunities and more. Twenty Bloomington organizations, businesses and nonprofit groups created the BIRD to help build community connections and to promote Bloomington's many resources. For more information, visit www.bloomingtoninfo.com, e-mail bird@bloomingtoninfo.com or call 952-278-8524.

LET'S TALK

CONVERSATION STARTERS FOR BUSY FAMILIES

WORK SCHEDULES, long commutes, sports and other commitments can get in the way

of family mealtime. Yet research continues to validate the importance of sitting down together and sharing a meal. Recent studies have found that teens who eat dinner with their families were less likely to use illegal drugs, alcohol and cigarettes.

Finding out about each other and discussing issues are an important part of the family meal. To get conversations started, Tri-City Partners has created the Let's Talk Jar that includes 100 thought-provoking, serious or fun questions for all family members.

For more information, call Public Health at 952-563-8984. To download questions for the Let's Talk Jars, visit www.tricitypartners.org.

ELECTIONS 2004

RESIDENTS TURN OUT TO VOTE

THE TURNOUT IN BLOOMINGTON FOR the November 2 General Election was 85.3 percent; Minnesota turnout was 77 percent. Thanks to the more than 50,000 citizens who voted and the more than 400 citizens who served as election judges.



NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED LOCALLY PRIZED

BLOOMINGTON IS A NATIONAL AWARD WINNER FOR outstanding participation in the 21st Annual National Night Out (NNO) crime, drug and violence prevention program held last August. With more than 313 registered neighborhood parties, our city was recognized as the eighth best in the nation among cities with populations from 50,000 to 99,999. *See right.* In addition, 14,000 pounds of food and more than \$400 were collected for Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People.

Congratulations to all participating neighborhoods for helping make this event a success.

Bloomington's NNO program has received five consecutive national awards thanks in part to the efforts of program coordinator and Crime Prevention Specialist Niki Pierson. For her dedicated work on NNO and other crime prevention programs, Pierson recently received top honors. *See page 2.*

POPULATION 50,000 - 99,999

1. Bloomington, IL
2. Brooklyn Park, MN
3. The Woodlands, TX
4. Sugar Land, TX
5. Coon Rapids, MN
6. Kent, WA
7. Frisco, TX
8. **Bloomington, MN**
9. Richardson, TX
10. Lodi, CA

A SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL ACHIEVEMENT BLOOMINGTON AWARDED TOP RATINGS FROM S & P's, MOODY'S AND FITCH

By Mayor Gene Winstead

BLOOMINGTON HAS JOINED AN ELITE FEW cities nationwide with three triple-A bond ratings. In October, Fitch Ratings became the third credit rating agency to assign a triple-A to the City based on its healthy economic growth, strong financial management and manageable debt burden.

The City also maintained its Aaa from Moody's and AAA from Standard & Poor's, the highest bond ratings awarded by those agencies.

Bloomington is one of only 20 cities out of more than 87,000 local governments in the U.S. that have achieved triple-A ratings from all three agencies. Our city is currently the only city in Minnesota to hold all three highest ratings. That puts us in a pretty unique class. In addition, Hennepin County is the only county in Minnesota and one of only 20 counties nationwide to have the top triple-A bond rating from all three credit rating agencies.

According to the agencies, Bloomington's triple-A status reflects the City's:

- Conservative fiscal management.
- Diverse economic base rooted in substantial hospitality, manufacturing, service and trade industries.
- Central location in the growing Twin Cities area.
- Low unemployment rates that fall below state and national averages.
- Continued success of the Mall of America tax increment district.
- Significant flexibility in maintaining its strong financial position.



- Manageable debt burden. The City's excellent bond ratings communicates to businesses and individuals that Bloomington is a healthy community. It signals current and potential investors that our financial future is strong and ensures Bloomington's interest costs will remain as low as possible.

"This is a significant achievement," said Robert Thistle, executive vice president of Springsted, Bloomington's financial advisor. "It enhances the

marketability of the City's bonds in the financial markets."

The achievement of three triple-A bond ratings doesn't happen overnight. The hard work of the current City Council and staff, as well as previous Councils and staff going back several decades, has paid off. The benefit of our strong financial position will be a great savings to everyone.

For more information, call Bloomington's Chief Financial Officer Lori Economy-Scholler at 952-563-8791.

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